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A village beauty, and other tales

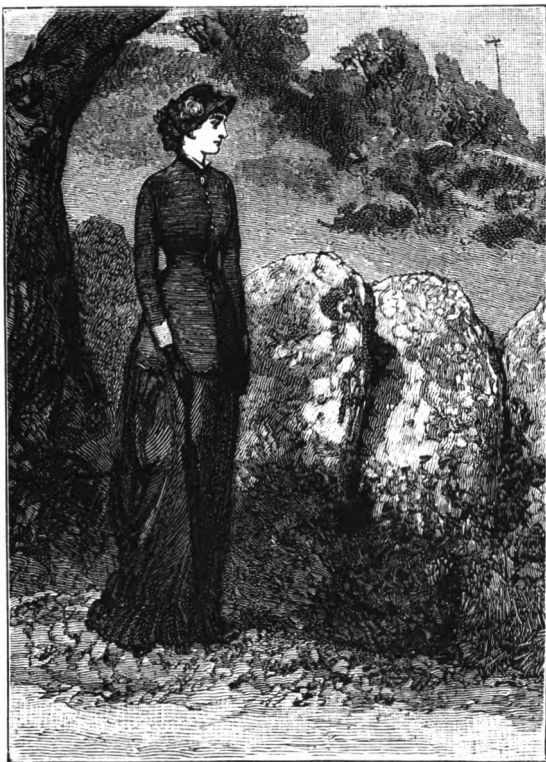
Village beauty

A VILLAGE BEAUTY,

And other Tales.

A VILLAGE BEAUTY,

And other Tales.



LUCY AT DEEPDENE.

'I was wishing for a figure.'—*P.* 21.

Frontispiece.

A VILLAGE BEAUTY,

And other Tales.

'A bubble world
Whose colours in a moment break and fly.'
TENNYSON.

WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS.

R. WASHBOURNE,
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1885.

256.f. 282.



TO MY DEAR PATRON,
THE VENERABLE JOHN EUDES,
I Dedicate these Tales,

IN THE HOPE THAT,
THROUGH HIS INTERCESSION,
THEY MAY PROMOTE THE GREAT WORK HE HAD SO
MUCH AT HEART; AND THAT THEY MAY BE
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE
GOOD OF 'SOULS, WHOM JESUS DIED TO SAVE,' TO
WARN THEM OF THE DANGER THAT
COMES FROM LISTENING TO
THE VOICE OF THE TEMPTER.

P R E F A C E.



T is a truth, too often forgotten, that nothing in this world can be isolated or alone, can rest immovable in itself. Everything works to a certain end ; each word, each action has a necessary consequence. This must be either good or bad, according to the source from which it arises. But the result may be seen and sudden, or it may be delayed and unseen ; perhaps it is more fortunate when the reward of evil is quick and unmistakable.

These tales show how easily temptation may arise, and how much more easily it may be yielded to ; while they bring out that terrible truth that events, apparently small and trifling, may grow into the most

fatal issues. If they keep the weak from falling, or encourage the wavering, or strengthen the feeble, their author will be satisfied. He hopes, too, they may soften the judgment of the unfallen, for those who are, perhaps, not weaker or more wicked, but only more tried and tempted than they themselves have been. For we are all encompassed with infirmity and feebleness; the attacks of evil are so many and so subtle, and in ourselves we have neither health, nor strength, nor courage to resist. So it is not for any of us to vaunt or boast; we can only pray, for ourselves and for others, that we may be delivered from the evil.

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LUCY CARR.



A VILLAGE BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

DEEPDENE.

THERE is a letter for one of you gentlemen,' said the landlord of the King's Arms, to two young men who had just entered the parlour of the inn.

'Not for me; it's for you, Jack,' said Edward Belton, handing the letter to his friend.

'A letter from my sister. I wonder what she is writing about! Oh! my poor father! He is seriously ill. I must return home at once; very sorry to leave you and

break up our pleasure-trip together. Landlord, get a conveyance ready as soon as you can; I want to catch the next train for the North.'

'Yes, sir; I'll have the waggonette round directly. You'll be in time for the express.'

Mr. Belton, having seen his friend and travelling companion started, ordered dinner, and, when he had finished his solitary meal, he strolled through the village, which possessed some objects of interest. The most prominent was the tower of the church. It was partially covered with ivy, and this, to the eye of an artist, may have given it a charm, but it marred its architectural beauty.

The Manor Farm, which was close to the church, was formerly the home of the Manbrigs, who were Lords of the Manor of Deepdene. There were now but few traces of their residence left. Almost all that remained was a panelled bed-chamber, with a richly carved wood chimney-

piece, on which were shields once painted with their armorial bearings. At the foot of the hill, below the Manor Farm, stood a gabled cottage, that had, in old coaching-days, been the Angel Inn, one of the four inns which the village then possessed. Here an ornamented ceiling and a moulded chimney-piece showed that at one time it was more than a humble cottage. By its fireside it is possible that King James I. may have rested, for it is said that his Majesty once passed through the village.

In former times Deepdene might have been a place of some importance, for it lay on the high-road, but now it is almost unknown.

There was much beautiful scenery in its neighbourhood, so that Mr. Belton, whose object was sketching, determined to remain for a short time at the King's Arms, and there he now returned, for it was getting dusk.

His first sketch, on the following day,

was the old gabled cottage which had taken his fancy the evening before. He had nearly completed his work, in which he was so absorbed that he did not perceive the thunderclouds which were gathering, till he was aroused by large drops of rain falling on his sketch-book, a warning that it was time to seek for shelter. He put his sketching materials together and was preparing to go, when the cottage door opened, and a girl came out, dropped a curtsey, and said :

‘ Please, sir, mother sent me to ask if you wouldn’t like to come in and shelter from the rain.’

‘ Thank you, my good girl, I will, for I shall get wet before I reach the inn.’ Any port in a storm, thought Mr. Belton ; and when there is so pretty a pilot to guide one, a man does not want to be asked twice.

‘ The gentleman says he will come in, mother.’

‘ Make haste, then, like a good girl, and

put out the tea-things ; maybe the gentleman would like a cup o' tea.'

Old Granny Carr, looking so neat and clean—not at all as if she had been busy with her work all morning—welcomed Mr. Belton with village courtesy, and, wiping a chair with her apron, begged the gentleman to be seated and to rest a while.

'I hope I don't take too much liberty, sir, but may I make so bold as to ask if you'd like a cup o' tea? Lucy and I are just going to sit down to our'n, and I'm sure if you'd like a cup you be heartily welcome.'

'Thank you very much, Mrs. Carr ; I am rather tired after my day's work, and a cup of tea will refresh me.'

Lucy, having laid the tea things, went upstairs to smooth her hair, and to make herself look as well as she could in the eyes of the handsome stranger, for she had a large share of vanity and self-esteem.

'What a nice girl your daughter seems,

Mrs. Carr, and so pretty ! I've seldom seen a prettier girl, even amongst our London beauties.'

'Yes, sir, folks do say as she be the beauty of Deepdene; and what's more, she be as good as she's pretty, and very good to her old granny. Though she do call me mother, I'm not her mother; I'm her grandmother. I took to her when she was a wee baby, after my poor child's death. Her father was sick, and so couldn't look after the little thing; and when he died the girl had no one to do for her but me. Children's a lot of trouble, sir; want a deal of looking after when they're young, and when they get older too, like she be now. I've had a sight of trouble to get her out in life; she didn't seem to care for service, to which I were always used, so I put her with a dress-maker at Waterham. It be a long way for her, poor girl, to go backward and forward; but she do like the walk, and generally comes home every evening to look after her old granny. Though when

there's a lot of work at Miss Thomas's she stays there all night to be ready first thing in the morning. She's a good girl to work, and Miss Thomas is well satisfied with her. Why, child, what a time you've been ! The gentleman's waiting for his tea !'

'Yes, mother, I wanted to tidy myself a bit, such a figure as I was, and a gentleman come to have a cup of tea.'

'Of coorse, Lucy. Don't I know you allays make an excuse to be fine and smart ? Pour out the tea, child.'

'May I beg another cup, Mrs. Carr ? I find your tea so refreshing after my long day's work.'

'Certainly, sir ; very proud as you like it, sir. Hope you'll kindly excuse me, sir, but I've not finished my washing for the Hall ; and the young Squire be a-leaving to-morrow, so I must be quick and get all done for Lucy to take to-night.'

'Quite right, Mrs. Carr. "Duty first, and pleasure after," is a good old saying. Now you are going to your duty, and I have had

my pleasure in a nice cup of tea and a pleasant chat with you and your granddaughter ; so I won't keep either of you away from your work. Good-evening, Mrs. Carr.'

' Good-evening, sir, and thankee kindly.'

The Valley of Deepdene was about a mile from the village ; its beauty of wood, and hill, and water, was well known, and attracted many. Each turn of the road, as it wound through the valley, gave a different view, and made it a matter of some difficulty to choose one spot better adapted than another for a sketch. Mr. Belton chose for his picture the upper end of the valley, where the woods and hills converged, and seemed to close it in. To his left lay a reedy pool, where the heron loved to dwell. On his right was a hill, crowned by a tower that looked like a sentinel placed to guard the valley.

The slanting rays of the sun fell on the windows of the tower and made them shine like gold, when Lucy Carr passed along

the road beneath it on her way home from Waterham. She dropped her curtsey, whilst she gave a smile of recognition to her grandmother's guest of the previous evening, and would have gone on if Mr. Belton had not begged her to stop for a few moments.

‘How fortunate I am, Miss Carr; for you have come just at the right moment! I was wishing for a figure to put in my picture to give life to it; for this valley, beautiful as it is, wants a little life to brighten it up.’

‘But surely, sir, you don't want to put a village girl like me in your draft?’

‘Yes, Miss Carr, with your permission, I do. I could have no figure more appropriate than the “Beauty of Deepdene,” as I hear that you are called. Do stand still for a few moments; I shall not keep you very long.’

‘Very well, sir; if you really wish it, I will. I hope, though, that mother won't mind. But then, there is my dress,’ said Lucy.

‘Oh, your dress will do very well; you look quite the lady, and are very nicely dressed. I suppose that milliners’ girls are better dressed than village girls usually are?’

‘Yes, sir; for we have to make an appearance, and sometimes we attend customers in the shop. I am so fond of dress; I spend nearly all I earn on it! Mother came into a nice bit of money not long ago, and she gave me some, which I spent on dress. She is so good to me, dear mother! She tells me that she spoils me.’

‘And don’t you like to be spoilt, Miss Carr?’

‘Oh yes, sir; I like to be made much of.’

‘And does anybody else make much of you besides your mother?’

‘I have no one to love me besides mother,’ said Lucy, with a tone of sadness in her voice.

‘You have had a quarrel with your lover,

then, I suppose, Miss Carr? Do not be downhearted about it; cheer up; all will come right in a short time, no doubt. Even if *he* should not come round again, you will soon find another lover; for such rare beauty as you possess must soon bring one to your feet.'

'Oh, sir, how can you talk so?' said Lucy, blushing. 'And to a poor girl like me, too!'

Mr. Belton continued his sketch of her. But the picture did not satisfy the artist; he wished for the original, and so took every opportunity of meeting Lucy and making himself agreeable to her.

Miss Thomas, in whose establishment Lucy Carr worked, having a large wedding order to be completed in a limited time, required the work-girls early and late to get it out of hand; so Lucy was obliged to remain at Waterham.

Mr. Belton soon missed her, and, as he feared that she might be unwell, he called at her grandmother's to make inquiries.

‘No, thankee, sir,’ said Mrs. Carr, ‘Lucy’s not ill; only Miss Thomas has an order for a wedding, and so Lucy must remain at Waterham for a week or so to help to finish it. Waterham’s a nice healthy town, sir, and Lucy do enjoy the best of health, though the dressmaking do confine her to the house a good bit; but I thinks as how her walks do help to keep her in good health.’

‘Very likely, Mrs. Carr;’ and Mr. Belton thought to himself, ‘I am sure that she would like a walk at Waterham after her long hours at work, so I will go over and offer to be her escort.’

Mr. Belton put his sketching materials together, and told the landlord of the King’s Arms that he intended going to Waterham for a few days, as he heard there was some good sketching to be found about there; but that he should return again to the King’s Arms to complete his views at Deepdene.

‘You’ve heard what’s quite true, sir,’ said

the landlord ; 'there is some very pretty scenery near Waterham. And I can recommend you to a good hotel there, sir, if you don't know of one—The Star.'

'Thank you, landlord ; it's always well to know of a good place to put up at, though I expect, if the weather is fine, I shall not be much at home.'

When Lucy, on the evening of the day on which Mr. Belton arrived at Waterham, went for her usual walk, she was surprised and pleased to see him whom now she almost considered a friend.

'How do you do, Miss Carr?' said Mr. Belton, raising his hat. 'You are quite well, I hope. This is, I cannot say an unexpected, though it is, I can assure you, a very great pleasure. I have left Deepdene for a few days, for I really could not make up my mind to remain there now that its "Beauty" has fled ; so that I have come here to make a few sketches. I hope that I may have the pleasure of accompanying you in your evening walks, and,

as you know the neighbourhood so well, you can point out the prettiest views. I need not say that any which Miss Carr may choose will be perfect in my eyes.'

Lucy was much flattered and gratified by Mr. Belton's attention. She thought so much of a 'real gentleman' coming to Waterham to see her.

Being Saturday night, the shops were open longer than usual; and as Lucy passed the drapers' shops she stopped, as women always do, to look in at the shop-windows.

'Are you admiring anything, Miss Carr?' said Mr. Belton.

'Yes, sir; I was admiring that very pretty black bonnet all covered with spangles, marked "Only fourteen-and-six." It's very little money for so pretty a bonnet. I wish I could afford to buy it.'

'Well, Miss Carr, will you accept it from me, as a mark of the interest I feel in you?' said Mr. Belton.

‘Oh, sir! I should like it so much, but I couldn’t accept it from you, sir; it’s too kind of you, sir.’

‘Nonsense, Lucy! if you like it, have it; I shall be only too pleased to give it you.’

‘Thank you, sir, so much! it’s so—so kind of you; I shall value it so for your sake.’

‘And now you’ve got the bonnet, Lucy, you’ll want a dress to match; so go and choose one.’

‘Oh, sir, you’re too good, too kind! Think of a gentleman buying things for a poor country girl like me! No, sir; I couldn’t; and after the bonnet, too!’

Lucy was delighted with Mr. Belton’s gifts, and the more so because they showed, as she fancied, that he really cared for her.

But the bonnet and the dress were only as the thread which the spider weaves to catch the unsuspecting fly. Mr. Belton in-

tended them to be as such, and they too surely realized his intention. Alas! that so many victims should fall a prey to the heartless spider.

One evening, when she was walking with her lover, she met her friend and companion from the work-room, who was much surprised and pained to see Lucy on such intimate terms with one so far above her in position. She felt sure that no good would come of the intimacy, and so determined to take the first opportunity of warning her of her danger.

Lucy could not help feeling that there might be truth in her friend's words; but she was proud and self-willed. Her pride rebelled against being advised; so completely losing her temper, she bid her friend say no more to her on the subject, but mind her own business and not interfere with her, for she was quite old enough to take care of herself.

When the wedding order was finished, Miss Thomas gave Lucy a fortnight's holi-

day to enable her to visit her aunt, who was going abroad as companion to a lady. Mr. Belton arranged that he and Lucy should spend his last day at Deepdene together ; but as the weather was too cold for outdoor enjoyment, they were to spend it in the Tower, overlooking the beautiful valley of the Dene. Here the hours passed too quickly for the lovers, and night came on before they thought of returning home.

It was a lovely moonlight night. From the windows of the Tower they watched the moon rise behind the dark firs of the opposite hill, and, as it rose high in the heavens, saw it touch the reedy pool with a ray of silver, and flood the meadow with its soft light.

As they walked through the wood the stars sparkled between the branches of the over-arching trees. The stillness of night was unbroken except by the mournful hooting of the owl or the occasional bark of the crafty fox.

How little did Lucy Carr think of all that might happen, before she again saw the moon shine over Deepdene, that beautiful valley, now changed for her into the Valley of the Shadow of Death !



IN HER GILDED CAGE.

'His bonnie bird.'—P. 32.

To face p. 31

CHAPTER II.

LUCY IN LONDON.

THE following day Mr. Belton left for London, to prepare, as he told Lucy, a home for 'his own darling bonnie bird,' to which he hoped she would soon come, when he would make her his wife.

Lucy was full of joy, and only anxious for the promise to be fulfilled. A few days after her lover's departure, she left Deepdene to pay her visit to her aunt.

The morning had been wet, but the rain having ceased, left the leaves of the trees glistening in the sun. A light mist curled over the woods, rich with the varied tints of autumn. The dark green of the Scotch fir formed, with the pale yellow spires of

the larch, an admirable contrast to the gold and brown of the beech.

The sun sparkled on the calm surface of the lake, on which the wild-fowl were enjoying the warm day, whilst the light air that stirred the trees caused the yellow leaves from the beech to flutter to the ground, as if they were tears shed for Lucy, who, unconscious of all the beauty around her, passed on to her doom.

When she arrived in London Lucy stayed with her aunt for a few days, till she went abroad, and then she went to Mr. Belton, to beg him to fulfil the promise that he had made her when he was at Deepdene ; but he put her off on one plea or another from day to day, till at length, weary of his 'bonnie bird,' as he had once called her, he turned her from his door, a homeless wanderer, with only a sum of money barely sufficient to keep body and soul together till an expected event should have taken place.

Homeless and friendless, and a stranger



OUTCAST IN LONDON.

· Homeless and friendless. —P. 32.

To face p. 32.

in the vast wilderness of London, where was she to go to, or where could she find a shelter? Who would take her in, for her aunt had left England, and her condition and scanty means made a return to Deepdene impossible?

It was a wretchedly wet night; the streets were sloppy and dismal, and the faint glimmer of the lamps as seen through the fog added to her feeling of utter misery. Sobbing as if her heart would break, she wandered on till she found some shelter, poor as it was, under the arch of a railway bridge, where she remained till morning dawned fair and bright, a contrast to the dark, wet night. But beautiful as the morning was, it brought little comfort to poor Lucy. Rousing herself, she looked around her at the dull brick houses standing out against the clear morning sky. Alas! what would she not have given if she could have been once more in her dear old home, looking on the tall trees and green fields, and listening to the song of

the birds instead of to the dull roar of London traffic! But she must go forward somewhere, but where? Utterly wretched she walked on, only anxious to find a place where she could hide herself from the gaze of the passers-by. She was weary and hungry, and went into a baker's shop, and bought a loaf, which she took with her to the neighbouring Park, where she could at least rest for a while on a seat under the trees.

Lucy now thought of her friend at Waterham, and of the advice she had given her to break off an intimacy that would bring her to 'no good.'

Her forlorn appearance attracted the attention of a gentleman crossing the Park on his way to his office. Going up to the poor girl, he asked her in such kindly tones the cause of her distress that his manner quite touched her heart, and, bursting into tears, it was some time before she was able to speak. On recovering composure, she told him her sad history in a few simple words.

Cases of sadness and misery were not unknown to the kindly gentleman, who belonged to the Brotherhood of St. Vincent of Paul. He took pity on her, and as the first thing to be done was to provide her with some respectable lodging, he took out his pocket-book and wrote a few lines, which he gave to Lucy to take to Mrs. McGrath, No. 7, — Street, Westminster.

Mrs. McGrath was a good Catholic, the widow of a sergeant-major in the Life Guards, who had recently died, and left her a little money, by which she was enabled to provide decent accommodation of a humble kind for lodgers. She was always happy when she could do a kindness to a neighbour, either by attending the sick or at the bedside of the dying ; so the gentleman knew that Lucy would be well cared for, both as to soul and body, by Mrs. McGrath.

Having given the note, Mr. Morgan went on to the City, whilst Lucy, deeply

grateful to him for his timely assistance, made her way to the street named. She knocked timidly at the door, feeling her sad position, which she did not like to expose to a stranger. She was, however, reassured by Mrs. McGrath, who, after learning from whom and for what she came, made her at once feel at home ; for there is so much kindness and delicacy of feeling in the poor ! Lucy was ushered into the parlour and left awhile to her own thoughts, whilst Mrs. McGrath went to get the poor girl some much-needed refreshment. The trouble she had gone through seriously affected her health, and brought on a premature confinement. During the many weeks of her illness, Mrs. McGrath was a most kind and attentive nurse, cheerfully responding to every wish of her patient, and procuring for her all the comforts that her means would permit. By the help of God, aided by Mrs. McGrath's tender care, Lucy regained her health, and was once more able to be about.

During her illness Lucy had often been soothed by the sound of bells ; and on inquiring from whence the sound came, Mrs. McGrath told her that the bells she had heard were those of the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, where she sometimes went to work, and that in the evening she was going to Benediction in the Convent chapel, if she would like to accompany her. Lucy had never been to any Catholic service, and expressed her readiness to go. It was on a Saturday, the last day of May, when the altar of Our Lady, being specially decorated for the occasion, looked particularly beautiful. Lucy was much struck by it, as well as by the image of Our Lady and the Divine Infant ; for it reminded her of a dream that she had had during her illness.

When Mrs. McGrath went to church the next day, Lucy begged to be again allowed to accompany her, and Mrs. McGrath was only too pleased to take her.

Lucy was very attentive to all that was

going on. The sermon was preached by a member of a religious Order, who had been invited to give a course of sermons at Holy Cross, during the month of June. The preacher was not only an eloquent man, but one who spoke from the fulness of his own heart, and so his words went straight to the hearts of others.

Lucy was much touched by the discourse, which was on the mercy of God to the sinner, and it seemed to be exactly suited to her. She was particularly struck by the words 'God is calling you,' and felt that they were specially addressed to herself. She reflected much on them.

"God is calling you." What ! can it be that God is calling me, poor sinful woman that I am ?

'Yes, Lucy,' said Mrs. McGrath ; 'God is full of mercy, and He is calling you, and He will have mercy on you, and give you grace to amend your life if you sincerely will it yourself.'

'Indeed I do, Mrs. McGrath. I feel

more than ever now how good God is, and I do wish never to offend Him again. Oh, I wish I believed as you do, Mrs. McGrath !'

' Well, my dear, pray to God to give you the grace to find out the truth, and courage to embrace it ; and be sure that He will hear your prayer.'

Lucy followed Mrs. McGrath's counsel, with the result that, not long after, she had the happiness of being received into the Catholic Church by Father Green, the venerable parish priest of Holy Cross.

After her reception into the Church, Lucy heard of the Asylum of the Good Shepherd ; she entered it, and spent two years very happily under the loving care of the good nuns, who, not only in name, but in reality, are like ' mothers ' to the ' children.'

As Lucy had no ' vocation for consecration,' she left the asylum, and would at once have got into a situation had she not expressed a great desire of returning to Deepdene to see her dear old granny.

But Lucy did not know that in this world she would never see her again, for, soon after she went to London, the poor old woman died of a broken heart.

Lucy left the asylum with great regret; her life whilst there had been most edifying, and she was a true penitent; her gratitude to God and her 'mothers' was unbounded.

The parting with Mrs. McGrath was a painful one. She had been Lucy's good angel, and her kind and tender nurse in sickness; besides having been, under God, the means of her obtaining the priceless gift of the Faith.

After much wise counsel from the old woman, Lucy started to return to the old home.

CHAPTER III.

LUCY RETURNS TO DEEPDENE, AND DIES.

HOW different the return was from the departure! Lucy left home a bright and thoughtless girl, and now she struggled back a sorrowing woman.

It was necessary to journey on foot, for her slender means did not permit her to do otherwise. Day by day she journeyed on as best she could, till at last, footsore and weary, she had almost arrived at Deepdene.

The nearest way would have been through the valley, but that spot was connected with too many sad memories; so she chose the longer road, up the hill to the common, which she reached just as the sun was setting.

There were still some three miles to go, but Lucy hoped to be at Deepdene before nightfall.

Vain hope ! darkness soon came on, and, the road being now strange to her, she lost her way.

There was no one of whom she could inquire, for she had passed the last cottage on this lonely road, and was now entering the wood which lay between the common and the hill which rose behind and sheltered Deepdene.

No human help was at hand. In her distress Lucy turned to the 'Guide of the wanderer here below,' and soon experienced how true it is that no one ever had recourse to Mary without being heard. As she left the wood and entered upon the hill, the moon, which had been obscured by passing clouds, now shone brightly in a clear sky, showing her the sign-post she knew so well, and the sight of which told her the way to the village. Hope rose in her heart as, fervently

thanking Mary, the 'Help of Christians' and 'Comforter of the afflicted,' she hastened on her way. She reached the sign-post, which seemed to stretch out its arms like a cross; but her strength was exhausted, and, though only a mile lay between her and Deepdene, she could go no farther. She wrapped her shawl closely round her to keep out the bitter March wind, and lay down to rest at the foot of the guide-post—a rest from which there was to be no earthly awakening.

Her life's journey was over. Instead of the village home she was trying to reach, she has, we hope, reached that heavenly home that since her repentance she had striven so earnestly to gain.

The body of Lucy Carr, sprinkled by the snow which had fallen during the night, was found the following morning by a shepherd as he was going to his work. She lay as if in a peaceful sleep, a crucifix—the parting gift of the Mistress of Penitents

when she left the Asylum of the Good Shepherd—clasped in her hand.

Summoning help, the shepherd and his fellow-labourers tenderly bore the body to her own old home, now inhabited by strangers; and there, in the little room she had occupied before her sad journey to London, they laid the lifeless remains of poor Lucy Carr.

The news soon spread that a woman had been found dead on the hill. The villagers flocked in to gaze on the body, in which they failed to recognise the once bright and happy Lucy Carr, the 'Beauty of Deepdene.'

And now in the churchyard of Deepdene, under the shade of a yew-tree, and looking towards her old home and the beautiful valley, lies poor Lucy Carr.

No earthly record marks the poor wanderer's grave—no appeal to God for mercy rises from it; but we may well believe that He has accepted her penance, and that though she may be 'satisfying

Lucy returns to Deepdene, and dies. 45

His justice, and worshipping His purity,
we may hope that by our prayers the time
of her suffering may be shortened, and her
entrance into heaven may not be long
delayed.

‘Eternal rest give to her, O Lord ; and
let perpetual light shine upon her.’

THE LOST ONE FOUND.



AT THE BALL.

'I returned to the ball-room.'—*P.* 56.

To face p. 49.



THE LOST ONE FOUND.

CHAPTER I.

THE BALL, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

I DON'T half like Captain Mar-
don's attentions to Maggie; my
dear,' said Colonel Conroy to
his wife, as they were seated together at
the breakfast-table. Maggie, too, seems
to look very kindly on him. I wish you
would speak to the girl. I hope that there
is nothing in it, but I cannot help think-
ing that there must be.'

'I have already remarked Captain Mar-
don's manner, my dear; indeed, it is too
plain not to be noticed, and I must say

that I do not like it either. I have spoken to Maggie on the subject, and I have warned her not to be so familiar in her manner to Captain Mardon. To say the least of it, she will be getting herself talked about, and possibly may get into some scrape. But you know how proud and self-willed dear Maggie is, and though she is so good a girl, she does not like to be reproved. Indeed, we none of us like to to be found fault with ?'

'Maggie tells me Captain Mardon is to leave Moor Hall after the ball to-night, as his leave of absence is expired, and he must return to his regiment ; though it is possible that he may get an extension of leave. But if he does he is going abroad, and so I think we need not fear that Maggie will see much more of him after the ball ; and we are all going there, you know. But here she comes, in her riding-habit.'

And very well she looked in it, too. Who can wonder that Maggie Conroy, with

her bright eyes and winning smile, should have so much attracted Captain Mardon?

‘Well, Maggie, so you are going to ride with Miss Willis?’

‘Yes, mamma.’

‘I hope that you will enjoy yourself. Is any one else to be of the party?’

‘Oh yes, mamma; Louisa’s brother Fred and Captain Mardon.’

‘Captain Mardon again! You’ll remember what I told you, Maggie dear, won’t you, not to be so familiar in your manner towards Captain Mardon?’

‘Oh yes, mamma; I will be very careful.’

The door opened, and a servant announced that Miss Willis had called for Miss Conroy to ride with her.’

‘Good-bye, mamma. Good-bye, papa.’

‘Good-bye, dear. I hope you’ll have a pleasant ride. And don’t overtire yourself; remember we’re going to the ball to-night.’

‘Oh yes; I’m sure I shan’t forget that;

I love dancing so much, better even than riding, and that is delicious.'

Maggie Conroy was a lovable, warm-hearted girl, but very headstrong if she took a fancy into that pretty head of hers.

There were great rejoicings at Moor Hall to celebrate the coming of age of Mr. Willis's son.

A dinner was given to the tenants and their wives. The cottagers and the school-children were provided with tea and cake, after which there was a display of fireworks in the park ; and now the festivities were to conclude with a ball.

It was a very brilliant ball, and would have passed off well had not an event occurred which changed it from a scene of pleasure into a dance of death.

In the infirmary of a Convent of the Good Shepherd lay a young woman in the last stage of consumption.

The Mistress of Penitents sat by her bedside.

‘I know that I am dying, dear mother, and that I have not many days to live. Before I die I should like to tell you something of my history, if you do not mind. It will comfort me to do so.’

‘By all means, my dear child ; tell me what you like.’

‘Well, dear mother, though I came here from the streets, I have not always been like the poor creatures you find there.’

‘No, my child ; I can see that you are of a superior class to the ordinary run of “unfortunates.”’

‘My father was a colonel in the army ; my real name is Margaret Conroy.’

The good nun was startled at the sound of the name ; for could this poor dying creature be the bright and beautiful girl she had once known ?

‘I was well brought up, and with as much comfort as a poor officer who had little beyond his pay could afford. I was the delight of my dear parents. Oh, my poor father and mother ! where are you

now, and do you still remember your unhappy child, who has caused you such bitter sorrow ?

‘ We lived in such a pretty cottage, near Woodborough Chase. I loved my home dearly. I can see it now, and I can fancy myself again a child, when I used to ramble in the oak woods of the Chase, and in the spring-time gather the bluebells that spread under the trees in great sheets of flower ; or when, in the warm summer-time, I chased the butterflies on our pretty lawn ; or, again, going on a bright autumn day with my little basket to gather blackberries ; and then, in winter, robbing the holly of its brightest berries to make our dear home gay for Christmas. Those were indeed happy days ! I was happy then because I was innocent, and now I am dying ! Oh ! what a gulf there seems to be between my present and my past !

‘ When I was grown up I had a dear friend, Louisa, the daughter of Mr. Willis, who was our nearest neighbour. She was

older than I was, but our tastes were so much alike, and we were so fond of one another, as to be almost inseparable. I have often thought of dear Louisa, and wished that I could see her again, but now it can never be.'

The Mistress of Penitents started at hearing herself thus spoken of, and she now felt sure that this poor girl was indeed her friend Maggie Conroy. She, however, concealed her feelings, so that Maggie might finish her story.

'Mr. Willis had a great friend, a Mr. Mardon, a wealthy man, who lived in the north of England, who died many years before I knew the family. This Mr. Mardon left an only son, who at the time of which I am speaking was a captain in the army. He was handsome, well informed, very agreeable, and very rich. Being the son of Mr. Willis's old friend, Captain Mardon was a frequent guest at Moor Hall, and it was hoped that he would marry Louisa; but Mr. Willis was not aware

of the irregular life Captain Mardon led, or he never would have desired him for a son-in-law.

‘Captain Mardon showed no inclination for the match. His attentions were all to myself, and I grew very fond of him ; but my dear father and mother did not like his attentions, and warned me against an intimacy of which they disapproved. I was self-willed, and would have my own way. “I sought myself and my own pleasure, and I found sorrow, and my sin has brought its own punishment.”

‘There was to be a ball at Moor Hall, and we were to go to it. I looked forward to that ball with such pleasure, because Captain Mardon was to be present at it. I can never forget that night ; every look of Captain Mardon’s, every word that he spoke to me, is so deeply impressed on my memory. I had made him my idol, and for him I forsook God.

‘When I left the supper-room with young Mr. Willis I returned to the ball-room, and

had another delightful waltz with Captain Mardon. Oh, what intoxicating pleasure it was! I felt as if I could have danced with him all night.

‘When the dance came to an end, which was only too soon, we went to the conservatory to get a little fresh air after the heat of the ball-room. It looked so beautiful, lighted up by Chinese lanterns, and seemed just the place for a declaration of love; and here it was that Captain Mardon made me that avowal of his love that I so much longed to hear. How his words thrilled through me, filling me with such pleasure! I had so hungered for them. I hoped that he loved me, but now I was sure, for I had heard it from his own lips.

‘After telling me of his love, Captain Mardon said to me:

“You know, my own, my dearest Maggie, that I must leave here to-night; and go without you—you, my own darling—I cannot! Oh say, do say, that you will

come with me ! Surely you will not, you must not, let me go alone far, far from you ?”

‘ I trembled with excitement, for I felt that I could not be parted from him. I would and I must go too. I could not leave him now. I forgot, in my blind passion, all my love for and my duty to my parents. I was mad.

‘ We escaped unobserved, taking a path in the shrubbery which led to a small wicket-gate that opened on the main-road at the lower part of the village, and found the carriage that Captain Mardon had ordered to be in readiness ; and so reached the station just in time to catch the night-mail for London.

‘ On our arrival Captain Mardon’s brougham was waiting for us, and we drove to his chambers. I there took some rest, which I much needed after the excitement of the previous evening and the fatigue of the journey. A letter for Captain Mardon gave the welcome intelligence that

an extension of leave had been granted him, so we were now free to do as we pleased.

‘After breakfast I went out, and chose a travelling-dress, preparatory to our journey to Paris, where our life was a continued round of gaiety.

‘But the time for Captain Mardon to rejoin his regiment approached, and we left to return to London. The battalion to which he was attached was ordered to the Cape, and he determined not to take me with him, for his love for me, as I could plainly see, was growing less day by day, and he was glad of the excuse to get rid of me. I was miserable; I could find no rest, no pleasure in anything, for I was to be separated from him I loved.

‘Some months after he left, I was sitting in my room, feeling very sad, for I had just come from Captain Mardon’s lawyers, through whom I was paid a quarterly allowance he made me. They informed me that the usual remittance had not been made them, and that till they

received it, or further instructions from Captain Mardon, they were unable to allow me anything. The kindly head of the firm, seeing my distress, gave me a sovereign, and this was all I had in the world. I had parted with all my jewellery. Most of the furniture of my once pretty apartment had already gone. I was awaiting the removal of the remainder, and then I should be thrown helpless and friendless on the streets.

‘A knock at the door. “Come in.” It was my little servant-girl, who announced that a man wished to see me.

“Very sorry to disturb you, miss,” said the man politely; “but I have come for the remainder of the amount due to Mr. Smith.”

“I really cannot pay,” I replied, opening my purse and showing my sovereign; “that is all I have in the world.”

“Very sorry indeed, miss, that I am; but I cannot help it. I have my orders, and I must carry them out. I must remove



IN PRISON.

'In prison for stealing.'—P. 61.

To face p. 61.

your goods at once if you do not pay ; those are my instructions."

' And in an hour all was cleared off, and I was turned out without a home. I plunged deeper into sin, going from bad to worse, till I found myself in prison for stealing a watch from a gentleman.

' I had not, thank God, lost the Faith ; and so on being asked when I entered the prison what was my religion, I replied, " I am a Catholic," and as such I was entered in the books. The priest who visited me was a fatherly man, very gentle and kind in his manner. He soon gained my confidence, and, aided by him, I was before long reconciled to God. When the term for which I was sentenced was over, the good Father urged me to enter the Refuge of the Good Shepherd, so that I might do what I could to repair my fall. I gladly availed myself of his advice, and, as you know, he brought me here.

' Now, dear Mother, my tale of sin and misery is finished ;' and Maggie leant back

in her chair, wearied with the effort she had made.

‘Thank God, my child, that you are here! I am sure, since you came to us, that you have done your utmost to atone for your sinful past. The doctor, as you are aware, gives us no hope of your recovery; so you must now turn your attention to prepare for an event which may not be long delayed; and may God give you the grace to die a holy and a happy death. Your sad tale has been of great interest to me, for I now feel sure that you are my dear and long-lost friend Maggie, and I must tell you that I am the Louisa Willis whom you knew so well, and loved so much!’

‘You, dear Mother! you Louisa Willis? Oh no! surely it cannot be?’

‘Yes; indeed, my child, it is. I am much altered; but I am your old friend Louisa. Altered, indeed, in appearance, and in dress; but unaltered in my love for you, my dear Maggie. How rejoiced I am to

have found you once more! You have been often in my thoughts; and daily, since you left us on that fatal night, I have prayed for you that God would give you grace to return to Him. At length He has heard my prayer. Blessed be His Holy Name!’

‘I am so anxious to hear how you became a nun; will you not tell me, dear Mother?’

‘Yes, dear child, I will, but not to-night, for you are tired, and want rest. To-morrow, if you are well enough, I will tell you about myself. Good-night, my dear child; sleep well.’

‘Good-night, dear Mother.’

CHAPTER II.

HOW LOUISA WILLIS BECAME A
RELIGIOUS.

THE following morning the Mistress of Penitents returned to the dying 'child.' She was pleased to find her somewhat better, and not overtired after the excitement of the previous day ; so sitting down by her bedside, she told Maggie how it was that she became a nun.

'You can easily understand, my 'dear Maggie, what a shock it was that night of the ball, when we found you had gone away with Captain Mardon. After the shock that it was to your poor parents, no one felt it more than myself. When all the guests were gone, I retired to my room, knelt down at my prie-Dieu, and

How Louisa Willis became a Religious. 65

prayed earnestly for you that God would give you the grace of repentance, and forgive you for what you must surely have done in a moment of passion. As I took off my pearl necklace with the diamond cross attached to it, my eye fell on the ruby which formed its centre, and as I looked at it I thought of the Sacred Heart you had so grievously wounded by your sin and ingratitude. You know that I loved you, but how much I grieved for you that night you cannot tell. I retired to rest, very weary, but I was unable to sleep, for I thought so much of you and what I could do to save you; what reparation I could make, and what sacrifice I could offer that would be acceptable to the Sacred Heart, so that you might be brought back to Its love. Surely, if I were to give soul for soul, if I were to enter into some religious Order and there spend my life in prayer and work to atone for your sinful pleasure, God will accept me as a victim of love. And then I

thought, but could I make the sacrifice and bear all the trials of a religious life? Could I give up all the luxuries to which I had been accustomed? Life, the world and its pleasures, were all before me. I felt that it would require a great struggle to give them up, and leave my dearly loved father and my happy home, where all my desires were gratified and my every want satisfied. But I felt, too, that if God had inspired the thought He would certainly give me the necessary strength. And then, to save a soul! Oh, what happiness! Could any sacrifice be too great?

‘At length the morning came, and I rose, but unrefreshed by my brief night’s repose. We were going to London in a few days, so I determined that I would open my mind to my director, a Jesuit Father, and ask his advice on the subject which so constantly occupied my thoughts. Without, of course, mentioning your name, I told him as much as was necessary of what had oc-

How Louisa Willis became a Religious. 67

curred, to enable him to see what first led me to think of becoming a nun.

‘My director had a special gift for discovering vocations. He acted with great prudence, and told me not to be in a hurry, but to take time to think over the step I contemplated, and to make it a special subject of prayer ; and, if possible, to make a retreat, the more clearly to see what was the will of God in my regard. I did as he bade me, and felt sure that God called me to the religious life. I foresaw that there would be some difficulties before I could accomplish my desire, and I felt what a hard trial it would be for my dear father to part with me, for I was his only daughter ; still, if God called me to serve Him in religion, I had no alternative but to obey.

‘When I told my father of my earnest wish to become a religious, he was, as I expected, much distressed at the thought of losing me ; but he generously made the sacrifice, and said, “ My own dearest child, God gave you to me ; and as He calls you,

to Him I resign you." I told him I felt sure that God would never allow him to regret his act of self-denial ; and that for myself, though I was about to leave him, I should always be his loving daughter.

'The question of the religious Order that I should enter, next occupied my thoughts. I was going along the gallery one morning, after hearing Mass, during which I had prayed with more than usual earnestness to be directed to do in this matter the Will of God, when my eye fell upon that beautiful print by Steinle, which represents a sheep struggling in a mass of thorns, and rescued by our Divine Lord, as the Good Shepherd, from its painful position. The sight of the picture directed my mind to the Order of the Good Shepherd, and it seemed an indication of Providence that I was called to enter that most beautiful Order, specially founded for the salvation of erring souls. The thought of you, dear Maggie, rose in my mind, and I said, "Surely this is the very Order for me to


How Louisa Willis became a Religious. 69

enter, as I desire, by going into religion, to offer my life for Maggie, if I can, by God's blessing, help her or any other soul for whom Jesus died."

' My director approved, and as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, I applied for admission to the Convent of the Good Shepherd, where I passed through my noviciate very happily, and was professed, and in due time appointed the Mistress of Penitents, in which position you see me, "a joyful mother of children;" and all the more I rejoice, because I can now consider you, dear Maggie, as one of my "children." '

CHAPTER III.

THE LOST CHILD FOUND.

NE fine morning in the early spring a gentleman, whose grey hair and care-worn looks betokened grief rather than age, was waiting to see the Reverend Mother in the parlour of the Convent of the Good Shepherd. He had not long to wait before the Superioress, attended by another nun, entered.

Rising from his seat and bowing courteously, Colonel Conroy stated the object of his visit. He said he had called to make inquiries about a young person who had entered the Refuge; for, from the description that had been given him of her, he had reason to believe that she might be his long-lost daughter.



THE DEATH-BED.

'She pleaded for forgiveness.'—*P.* 72.

To face p. 71.

The Reverend Mother said that a young girl answering to his description had entered the Refuge, and was now in it.

Colonel Conroy exclaimed :

‘Thank God, then, I have at last found my daughter ! Can I see her ?’

‘Certainly, if you are her father ; but I am grieved to tell you that she is seriously ill, and that the doctor gives us no hopes of her recovery.’

Colonel Conroy bore the sad news as well as he could, thankful that if his daughter were to be taken from him, at least she would, after all her wanderings die in peace.

‘If you will wait here a few moments,, Colonel Conroy, I will break the news of your arrival to your daughter, and then the Mistress of Penitents will conduct you to her bedside.’

The meeting of father and daughter was, as may be imagined, an affecting one. Maggie was rejoiced that before her death she was able to see and ask the forgiveness

of her father for all the wrong she had done, and the sorrow that she had caused both himself and her fond mother, of whose death she was not aware.

On hearing that her mother was dead, Maggie was much overcome; she sobbed bitterly, and, when the violence of her grief had somewhat abated, said:

‘Oh, my own dear loving mother, look down on me from your bright throne in heaven—look on your ungrateful and wicked, but now repentant child, and pardon me for all the suffering that I have caused you. Ask God to have mercy on me, and to forgive me my sin.’

Then turning to her father, she pleaded with him for that forgiveness which he so readily accorded. It was indeed a sight to touch the heart, this dying child and sorrowing father, who, however, rejoiced that he was permitted to see his beloved child before she died.

And let the sight touch your heart, Captain Mardon! Look upon the ruin

that you have caused—look upon the once beautiful Maggie, for whom you professed such love, now struggling in the arms of Death—look upon her mother, who died of grief for the loss of her child—look upon the heart-broken father, from whose side you tore the joy of his eyes and the pride of his life—and say, can you think of all this, and not loathe the vile seducer?

And all this is the consequence of sin! Truly, 'the wages of sin is death!'—death to peace and happiness here, and too often, alas! followed by an eternal death hereafter.

The excitement caused by her father's visit was too much for Maggie in her weak state. A few days after it she became worse; the last Sacraments were administered, and Maggie Conroy calmly breathed her last, in the arms of the Good Shepherd, through Whose great mercy she had been led to the Refuge, where she found peace and happiness and a holy death.

Her body lies in the burial-ground of the penitents, where her grave is often visited by Mother Mary of the Cross, the Mistress of Penitents.

THE
VOICE OF THE TEMPTER.



THE TOWER OF ALVERLEY CHURCH.

'The fine old parish church.'—*P.* 78.

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THE
VOICE OF THE TEMPTER.

CHAPTER I.

MARY BEACH.

THE warm rays of a summer sun gladdened the heart, and bathed in a flood of light the churchyard of Alverley ; but in one spot they caused a shadow from a tall elm-tree to fall on an open grave. Little groups of villagers stood about, evidently waiting for a funeral, when a mournful procession left a humble cottage home, and wended its way to the churchyard.

The funeral is over. The corpse is laid in the grave with the beautiful ritual of the Catholic Church. The priest and his acolytes, with lights and incense and holy water, have passed, reciting the 'De profundis.' The mournful procession has returned to its saddened home, and now the villagers crowd round to take their last look at the coffin of poor Mary Beach.

We, too, will look into that open grave ; perhaps it may have some lesson for ourselves, for the grave has many lessons, and the dead still speak.

Whilst the grave-digger is filling up that grave, and as we hear the earth fall on that coffin, we will sit in the churchyard and tell our brief and simple tale.

Near the fine old parish church, whose tower rises above us, stands Alverley Manor, in its well-timbered park of ancestral trees.

It is a quaint old place, this Alverley Manor, with its mullioned windows, and gables, its trim garden, yew hedges and trees clipped into fantastic shapes. From

where we sit we see its chimneys between the fine elms of the avenue, where the rooks build ; and we hear them, too, as they seem to join like mourners in the sad scene we have just witnessed. Mr. and Mrs. Maxfield are the possessors of Alverley Manor. Alverley Manor has many memories of the past. Memories of Maxfields who have long ago gone to their rest ; memories of those who lived in the ' Ages of Faith,' as well as of those who suffered persecution for it, fines, imprisonments and death ; memories of the times when the priest, hiding from his pursuers, would gather round him a few Catholics to hear by stealth the Holy Mass.

Oh, let us treasure up such memories, and feed our souls with the virtue, the constancy and devotion to the Faith of our Catholic forefathers !

How much do we not owe them for that priceless gift the Catholic Faith, which they kept through troublous times, and which they have handed down as their most

precious heirloom to be most jealously guarded, and to be bequeathed by us to our descendants ! Of such an ancestry came Mr. and Mrs. Maxfield, and they were worthy of their ancestors. Almost under the shadow of the parish church rises once more—now the days of persecution are past—a little Catholic church, with its school and presbytery, now the home of the zealous priest, Father Hope, who has come from a large field of labour to save souls in quiet Alverley village.

Wherever we go there is the glory of God to promote, and there are souls to save, and to do both of these was Father Hope's one desire and aim. As a good shepherd he tended all the members of his flock ; but the little ones were his special care, for he well knew how important a good religious training was to prepare them for the difficulties and temptations they might meet with when, having left their quiet village homes, they would be plunged into the turmoil of the world.

James Beach—or, as he was commonly called, ‘Keeper Beach’—the father of our heroine, had only lately come with his wife and children to Alverley, to take service under Squire Maxfield.

The keeper’s lodge was well and pleasantly situated on rising ground at the upper part of the park, over which and the surrounding country it had a good view. It was entered by a porch, covered in summer by the bloom of a white rose and honeysuckle. But as yet they were not in bloom, for it was early spring, that delightful season of the year when the opening flowers and the budding trees give promise of joys to come. The rooks in the elms near the manor-house were busy with their nests, the lambs frisking in the park, the primrose and the violet bursting into flower on the hedge-bank, on that bright spring morning when Mrs. Maxfield passed along the lane that led to the keeper’s lodge.

‘Good-morning, Mrs. Beach,’ said Mrs. Maxfield ; ‘I am come to pay you a visit in

your new home. I hope you will like it, and that your husband will like his place. Mr. Maxfield is a kind master, and neither he nor I like to change our servants if they feel comfortable in our service, and there is no reason why any of them should be otherwise. We are somewhat old-fashioned people in our way of thinking, for we like to consider our dependants, and we wish them to consider themselves, as part of the family. Old Rose, who was keeper before your husband, has been in the service of Mr. Maxfield's family from a boy, and married and brought up his children whilst in it; and some of them still work for us. But Rose himself has got too old and rheumatic to follow a keeper's life, so Mr. Maxfield having given him a couple of rooms in our village almshouse and a small pension, he is well provided for in his old age.'

'Yes, ma'am; I think servants do go about too much nowadays; they say they want a change, but as the old saying has it, "A rolling-stone gathers no moss."

I don't see as how they be a lot better for all their changes.'

'And how many are you in family, Mrs. Beach?'

'We be six in all, ma'am; there be the keeper and I. Mary, here, be the eldest, and a downright good girl she be too, ma'am; helps mother so nicely, and looks after her little sister, and takes her baby brother out in the perambulator. Then Tom, he is getting a useful lad; and now he has finished his schooling he goes out with his father. Then comes little Emily and my baby. They be all good children, ma'am, thank God; and I'm blessed with a good husband. He be fond of his home, and don't go away drinking at the public, "giving his money to the landlord," but brings it home to make us all comfortable. Ah, ma'am, how many I've seen who've got husbands as spends pretty nearly all they gets!'

'Yes, Mrs. Beach; it's that dreadful drink that makes so many homes wretched.'

A few days after her visit to Mrs. Beach, Mrs. Maxfield was going to the village school when she met Keeper Beach coming out of the Hill plantation.

‘Beg pardon, ma’am,’ said the keeper, touching his hat ; ‘may I take the liberty of saying a word?’

‘Certainly, keeper ; I shall be very glad to hear what you have to say.’

‘Please, ma’am, the missis and I have been talking over sending our Mary to the Catholic school, if we may make so bold. We hear that it be a very good school.’

‘Yes, keeper, it is a very good school ; and we shall be very pleased to see Mary in it. But it is only right for you to know that she will have to learn her Catechism the same as the other children ; and if Mary does attend our school, the end of it may be that she may become a Catholic. So perhaps you and your wife had better think it over again, for we don’t want, even if we could, to force any one to be a Catholic against their will.’

‘Certainly not, ma’am ; but if our Mary

likes to be a Catholic, ma'am, I've no objection, and I'm sure the missis hasn't either.'

'But what makes you so favourable to Catholics?' said Mrs. Maxfield.

'Well, ma'am, you see as how I and my missis went to the Catholic chapel last Sunday afternoon, and Father Hope was giving a discourse about the practices, as he called them, of the Catholic Church ; so says I to my missis, when we come away, " Well, if folks ud all foller that teaching, they'd be the better for it ;" and we want our Mary to be good, so we'd like her to be a Catholic, please, ma'am.'

'I am very glad to hear it, keeper.'

'And them lights, ma'am, on the altar after the sarmin, they did look beautiful, they did ; I should like our Mary to have seed it.'

'What? Benediction, I suppose you mean.'

'Yes, ma'am ; I think that's what they did call it.'

'Well, keeper, as you and your wife both wish it, Mary shall go to our school. I am

going there now, and will arrange for her to enter next week.'

'Thank you, ma'am ; I am sure I'm very much obliged.'

On the Monday following, Mary Beach went to the Catholic school. As she was the only Protestant in the school, and also only recently come to the village, she was rather shy at first ; but she soon got over this feeling, and became quite happy, and was a general favourite.

Mary was naturally a quick and clever girl, and soon made such good progress in her Catechism as to be ready to be put under instruction.

Application was, therefore, made to her parents to know if it was their wish for their daughter to become a Catholic, when they readily consented.

Father Hope then impressed upon Mary the great grace God had given her in calling her to the true Faith—a grace for which she owed Him a deep debt of gratitude, for it was not one given to all ; and told her that after she was received into the

Church she must act up to its teaching, for 'that it was not sufficient to be a Catholic,' but that she must be a good Catholic.

Soon after Mary's reception into the Church, she made her first Communion and received Confirmation. When she had finished her schooling, Mrs. Maxfield took her for a short time into her house that she might learn a little of household work. Then, finding her to be a willing girl, and likely to make a good servant, she sent her to be trained for service in a House of Mercy, which, with the Convent and school adjoining, had been founded by a holy soul who had recently been called away to receive the reward of her long years of labour in the service of God. Here Mary found many other girls, who, like herself, had come to be trained. They were all very happy, and very sorry when the time came for them to leave their home under the care of the good Sisters. Mother Gertrude was the nun appointed to have charge of the girls, and to her application was made by ladies who required a servant. One

morning Mother Gertrude received a letter from a Mrs. Norton, asking if a servant could be recommended to her, as she was in immediate want of one.

Mary had now been a little over twelve months in training, and, being competent to take the situation, was recommended for it. Poor Mary, much distressed on being told that she must now go into service, burst into a flood of tears, and said, as well as her sobs would permit: 'Oh Mother, Mother! must—I—go? Can't—I—stay long—longer? I am so—so happy here; and now—to go! Oh dear! oh dear! I don't like it; in—deed I—don't. Oh dear!'

Mother Gertrude told her that she too would be very sorry to part with her, for she had always been a good girl; but that now, being capable of taking a situation, it was her duty to go out into the world and take her place in it, whilst at the same time she gave her much good advice to help her in fighting her battle in life.

CHAPTER II.

THE NORTONS.



HE family into whose service Mary Beach was about to enter were excellent Catholics, converts to the Faith. Mr. Norton was just completing the purchase of an estate, for he had been obliged to leave his old and much-loved home, which his medical adviser told him he thought did not suit his health—never very robust; and now he hoped to be the possessor of Westwood, a property which seemed very suitable for the realization of a long-cherished desire. When Mr. Norton became a Catholic, he had made a promise that he would build a church, both as a thank-offering to God for the Faith he had himself received, and likewise

that it might be a means of drawing others to the fold. Mr. Norton feared that his great difficulty would be to obtain the consent of his wife, who still remained in the Anglican Church.

This difficulty, however, did not prove so formidable a one as he had expected, for when he told his wife of the desire he had so long entertained, and his reasons for it, she at once gave her consent, though she knew the sacrifice it would entail—the reduction of their establishment and a greater simplicity of life—trials which to Mrs. Norton, fond as she was of society, were very great ; but she generously made the sacrifice for God, and so became co-foundress with her husband of one of the most beautiful churches to be seen in England. Mrs. Norton's act of self-denial met with its reward, for a few months after she herself, convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith, was received into the Church, and became as fervent a Catholic

as she had been a strong and even bitter Protestant.

* * * * *

'I hope we have not disturbed you, mamma dear,' said a bright-eyed girl, who with her young sister ran into the drawing-room where their mother was resting.

'No, my dears, you have not disturbed me, for I was not asleep. It was too dark for work, so I closed my eyes, and was thinking what news your papa would bring us, for I expect him home this evening. I hope he will have completed the purchase of Westwood, as he expected to do to-day. This continued anxiety is very trying to your papa in his delicate health.'

'Oh yes, mamma! indeed, I hope papa will buy Westwood. You told us it was such a beautiful place. Katie and I have been saying our Rosary ever so many times for papa's success.'

'That is right, my dears; so many prayers have been granted when the

Rosary has been said, I do not doubt but what God has heard yours, as they arise from such innocent hearts. But, listen! there is the front-door bell. Run and see if it is your papa.'

Mrs. Norton was no long time in suspense, for the joyful shouts of 'Papa, papa! we are so glad to see you back!' soon told Mrs. Norton that her husband had arrived. She hastened to meet him, and welcome him home.

'But, oh, dear George, how tired you look! Do come and rest, and then you can tell us all about Westwood.'

'Oh yes, papa, do!' said the children. 'Have you bought it?'

'Yes; I am thankful to say the purchase is now complete.'

'Is there a lake at Westwood, papa, and an island on it for a hermit? You know you promised to buy a place with an island. I so want to see a hermit.'

'Yes, my dear; there is a lake and an island too. But we shall want more than

one hermit, even if we could get him to leave his cell to convert the people round Westwood. There will be great difficulty in planting the Faith there, for there is so much prejudice ; but the poor people know no better. They have had no means of knowing anything about Catholics in their secluded valleys. I take them to be very much like the people St. Francis of Sales found in the Chablais; and as that great saint made an impression on that country, so I hope the good religious I intend to establish at Westwood will also make an impression on its population.'

'And when are you going to build the church, papa?'

'As soon as I can, my dears. But we are not yet at Westwood ; we must settle down there first. I have fixed on what I think will be a very good site near the homes of the people, which are so picturesquely situated on the hillsides. Some of the villages perched on the hills remind me of those we saw when we were at

the baths of Lucca. The church will be at some distance from our own home; but we must make that little sacrifice for the glory of God and the good of souls, and perhaps later on we may be able to have a little chapel of our own. Our valley is very beautiful, but so secluded—"far from the busy haunts of men." We can see little but the woods on its sloping hills. It is quite a little "bird's-nest" where we are going to live.'

'Oh, papa! how delightful to live in a bird's-nest!'

To return to our heroine.

Life is somewhat dull in a quiet household like that at Westwood, and the servants certainly found it to be so. But the life of a servant is usually one of great sameness. Its daily round of duty makes one day much like the one that has preceded it. But if rightly considered, the life of the servant who faithfully performs his or her daily toil conscientiously, cheerfully, as we have known so many to

do, is very meritorious. They lay up for themselves treasure in heaven, whilst by their good example they help us on our way to it.

Mary Beach had not been long at Westwood before she was captivated by the attractions of a young man, Jem Baker, who was employed in work about the house. He was about Mary's own age, and, being much thrown together, it was only natural that they should fall in love. And so it was. Mary loved her dear Jem with all the warmth of her affectionate nature, but he did not return her love as she wished him to do.

Jem was fond of Mary, but we fear he had some attractions elsewhere. However, the love-making went on between them. Mary had, as confidante in her love affair, Ellen Weston, a servant who had recently come to Westwood. On her first coming to Westwood, Mary had shown Ellen much kindness, and this brought them together, and made them fast friends. Ellen was

older than Mary, and had been some years in service, and so she was able to advise her young friend in the many conversations that Mary held with her on the subject of her lover, 'dear Jem Baker.'

It was now near Christmas-time, and old Johnson, the gardener, had brought in the brightest-berried holly he could find, as well as misletoe boughs, to decorate the hall and kitchen. What merriment there was on Christmas Eve, when Ellen, who was a fine tall young woman, mounted on the kitchen-table to hang the misletoe on a beam, which otherwise she would have been unable to reach; and how well she looked, too, as, with uplifted arm, she fixed 'the bush' in its place!

About Christmas-time Mr. Cross, a tradesman from Naworth, usually came with a selection of fancy articles, brooches, lockets, Christmas cards, etc., for 'the girls,' who would gather round the kitchen-table to admire and make their purchases.

One of the upper servants, having bought a silver locket, induced Mary to follow her example. Now Mary's wages did not permit her to indulge her fancy as her companion had done ; but Mary was weak, and easily led, and she did not like to say no to the solicitations of her fellow-servant. So she bought the locket, though it cost more than she could prudently afford.

Mary was delighted with her purchase, and ran off to show it to her friend Ellen.

'Look, Ellen, what a beautiful locket I've bought ! Isn't it lovely ? Caroline bought one, and told me how nice it would be to be like her, so I bought one too.'

Mary saw that her friend was not pleased, and said :

'Now, Ellen, don't be angry. Admire my beautiful locket. Now do ! Don't be so cross.'

'Of course I'm cross, and no wonder, to see how foolish you've been, to go and spend your money as you have done. I'm

sure that locket cost you more than you can afford. If Caroline likes to spend her money as she does, I suppose she has a right to do it. She knows best. But that is no reason why you should follow her example. It's wrong of you to spend your money on what's useless. You know your boots are worn out, and you must get another pair; and where's the money to come from now? And your mother—why, only the other day you told me you were going to send her a little money for Christmas; and now you've forgotten all about this, because you did not like to say "No" to Caroline when she asked you. Mark my words, if you can't say "No" when you ought, you'll get into trouble some day, and live to regret it.'

Alas! Ellen's words were only too true.

'You are young, Mary, and ought to save your wages for old age, or a rainy day, when you'll be glad to have a little money laid by.'

Oh,' said Mary, 'I'll lay by when I am twenty.'

Mary counted on a future which never came for her, for in less than three months after her twentieth birthday she was laid in her grave.

'Besides,' said Ellen, 'what's the use of your locket? You can't wear it, for Mrs. Norton does not approve of such things; and even if you did wear it, you'd only get yourself stared at and talked about, as if you wanted everybody to admire you.'

'No, Ellen, I don't want everybody to admire me. I only want Jem Baker to love me. Oh, how I love him! dear Jem! If he'd only love me as I love him I should be so, oh, so happy!'

'I only wish, dear Mary, that Jem Baker did love you as you wish him and as you deserve; but I'm afraid you'll be disappointed in Jem. He has not the respect for you that a man ought to have for the girl he loves. And, believe me, there can be no true love without respect.

Besides, only yesterday Jem Baker was talking of you, and he told me that he wanted a "brighter" girl than you, Mary. Let him talk. I'm sure he'll never find a better girl than you, or one that will make him a better wife, go where he will,' said Ellen, fondly embracing her friend. 'I am sure you'd make any man a good wife, and he'll be a fortunate man that marries you.'

But here comes Mr. Johnson with the fruit for dessert.'

'Well, girls, talking of Jem Baker, I suppose, as usual?'

'Yes, Mr. Johnson,' said Mary; 'and why shouldn't we? You talked of your sweetheart, I suppose, when you were young, and why shouldn't I talk of Jem Baker? Do you think, Mr. Johnson, that I shall ever be Jem Baker's wife? I love him so much—I can't live without my dear Jem!'

'Well, my girl, I hope you'll marry him, if it is for your happiness. You'll make a nice couple. But, if you don't marry Jem Baker, you'll not marry any one else.'

‘What, Mr. Johnson, and be an old maid?’

‘I’ll tell you what you’ll be, Mary,’ said Johnson; ‘you’ll be a saint or a devil. I have got that opinion of you, that you’re easily led, according to the company you keep, so take care; but a saint or a devil you will be.’

To this Mary made no remark.

As is so generally the case in building, Mr. Norton found that some alterations he had made in his house at Westwood cost more than he expected. This, coupled with losses on farms, from the depressed state of agriculture, so crippled his at no time large income, that retrenchment was absolutely necessary. The strictest economy had to be carried out on the estate, as well as in domestic management at home. To lessen expense Mary had notice to leave, notice given with great reluctance by Mrs. Norton.

Mary herself was very sorry to go, but, as she told her friend Ellen, she felt sure

'it would be all for the best in the end,' and that Mrs. Norton would be rewarded for all her kindness to herself. Mrs. Norton was most anxious about Mary's well-being. Westwood had been her only place, and she was now, a young and inexperienced girl, about to leave it; and who knew what dangers she might meet with in her next situation?

To help her, as far as she could, Mrs. Norton gave her a few words of counsel, with some books of piety to read from time to time, hoping that she might be aided by them to combat the difficulties she would find in the world.

Mary was most grateful to Mrs. Norton for her kindness, and, with characteristic humility, said that she was 'not worthy of so much.' She told Mrs. Norton that she felt sure 'she would never have so good a mistress again,' and promised, 'as the only return she could make,' to pray for her—a promise which she faithfully kept.

Mary was liked by all. There was not

a dry eye amongst the servants who stood at the door to wish her good-bye. Even old Johnson could hardly restrain his tears.

A few days after Mary had left Westwood, Mrs. Norton was passing from the kitchen towards the 'drawing-room, when she met Johnson, lifting a heavy case of wine into the cellar.

'Too heavy for you, Johnson, I think, is it not? You want help. You miss Mary now, I am sure, for I know she used to help you when these heavy cases came in.'

'Yes, ma'am, indeed I do miss her,' said Johnson; 'and so we all miss her, I can assure you. She was a good girl, and so willing; that gave her half her strength.'

'Yes, Johnson, as you say, she was a good girl. I must say I liked her, and I am very sorry to have parted with her. I only hope that she will do well wherever she goes.'

'I hope so too, ma'am,' said Johnson; 'but Mary was easily led, and it depends

what company she is in, what way she will take. Mary will be either a saint or a devil ; that's my opinion.'

'Those are strong words to use, Johnson,' said Mrs. Norton.

'Maybe, ma'am ; but they're the truth.'

Mrs. Norton's anxiety about Mary was now redoubled, since this speech of Johnson's, 'Mary will be either a saint or a devil.'

Mrs. Norton wrote at once to Mary, and gave her much good advice ; she also begged prayers for her in all directions. In her letter Mrs. Norton told Mary that now she had left Westwood, so quiet and secluded as to be scarcely like the world, she should be more than ever on the watch, and pray more earnestly for grace to withstand the temptations to which she might be exposed. She begged her to remember how her soul resembled a bright mirror, in which the image of Christ could be seen reflected ; and how careful she should be to allow nothing to stain the brightness of

that mirror, but keep its purity unsullied ; and never allow a hand to touch her rudely, or a word to be spoken to her that could raise a blush on her cheek ; to be careful of the friends she made, and, if ever she might want advice, to seek it from her parents or her mistress rather than from others who could not advise her so well.

When she left Westwood, Mary returned to her home at Alverley till she could find another situation. It was some two months before a suitable one could be found, and this at length was obtained through the kindness of Mrs. Maxfield.

During this time of waiting, that Mary might not be wholly idle, Mrs. Maxfield allowed her to go to her house to assist in the work.

Mary's new situation was in a large establishment at Morley Court, where there were, besides the family, many servants, both men and women. The work was harder than at Westwood, but the wages were

proportionately high, and Mary, when she got a little accustomed to her new place, liked it and her fellow-servants, and was very happy till an event occurred which blighted her life.

‘Love was the fond rage, which blighted her young life’s bloom.’

A handsome young groom, Bob Merton, who had frequently to ride over to Morley Court on errands for his master, attracted Mary’s attention ; whilst he, too, was taken by her pleasing face and fine figure. As they had many opportunities of seeing each other, whilst he was waiting for his message, they soon became intimate. This intimacy ripened into love on Mary’s part, but Bob Merton only pretended a love he did not really feel. He thought only of his own pleasure, whiling away his time with a pretty girl. Mary, inexperienced as she was in the world, really believed Bob Merton’s pretty speeches, and could not understand how a corrupt heart could be concealed by so good-looking a face.

Soon after Mary was settled at Morley Court, she wrote to her friend Ellen, at Westwood, to tell her all about her situation and her fellow-servants, and all that was of interest to her ; and she naturally spoke of Bob Merton and the growing attachment she felt for him—a love which, to her surprise, exceeded that which she had before felt for Jem Baker.

In her reply to this letter Ellen told her friend to remember the advice she had given her before she left Westwood—that if she should ever be in a situation such as she was in now, where there were men-servants, she should keep on her guard, and remember to respect herself. Ellen also told Mary not to give her affections to the young man she spoke of before she became better acquainted with his character, and to endeavour to find out what likelihood there might be of his making her a good husband, because the fact that he was not a Catholic did not augur well for her prospect of happiness.

Mary was very fond of Ellen, but she loved Bob Merton more, and the next time she saw him she had either forgotten or failed to remember her friend's wise counsel.

Alas, that she was so careless, and in a matter where the happiness of her future life was at stake! Bitter indeed was her repentance for not having borne in mind the advice given her by her friend, and, instead, trusted so foolishly one of whom she knew so little.

Mary was afraid that Mrs. Newby might object to her love for Bob Merton, and so kept her interviews with him secret. If she had confided in her mistress, she would have been told the young man's real character, and so have been saved from sin, as well as much sorrow and suffering.

Mrs. Norton, who was ever anxious for Mary's welfare, had, the Lent following her departure from Westwood, sent her a crucifix, with an earnest recommendation, for the love of God and Jesus crucified, to

keep it with her by day and by night ; and when temptation came upon her, or trials and troubles crowded round her, to touch the crucifix, calling earnestly at the same time on Jesus for help.

This crucifix Mrs. Norton had had indulged for Mary for the hour of death ; but little did she think, when she sent it to her, that in less than three months she would hold it in her hands through her long death-agony.

Mary thanked Mrs. Norton in grateful terms for the crucifix, and the kind letter which had accompanied it, saying she would try all she could to follow the good and kind advice given her, and go often to her duties, which she knew was the best means of persevering in God's grace. She said the crucifix was very nice, and she liked it very much, and that she felt it might be a help to her in some of her undertakings, adding how undeserving she was of so much kindness.

CHAPTER III.

HOW SIN BEGAT DEATH.



UPLEY was a large village, at no great distance from Morley Court. It was situated in a valley, on one side of which rose a steep hill, well known for its Roman camp, from which there was a fine view over the great vale that stretched away for miles ; on the other side was a range of wooded hills. In some pleasant meadows under these hills the Cottage Flower Show of Upley was held. It was usually a very good show, and the athletic sports which formed part of it were very attractive, drawing large numbers to witness them. The servants at Morley Court were all going to the show. Mary had long looked forward to the day, not for

the flowers or the sports, but because she hoped to spend a long afternoon alone with Bob Merton, who had promised to meet her. Mary felt so happy, but happiness is not always where we expect to find it ; for sometimes in its stead we meet with sorrow. Little indeed did Mary think that *her* dream of earthly happiness was so soon to vanish.

Before the servants reached the field where the show was held, they passed the village green, where rustic amusements were provided. There was a steam circus with gaily decked horses to ride, boat-swings, and a shooting-gallery, with booths filled with cakes and toys for the children. It was a pretty sight to see the laughing girls circling round on the horses of the circus, or tossing to and fro in the boat-swings, thoroughly enjoying themselves. But Mary did not care for it all, as Bob Merton was not there ; so they went into the show-field, where she expected to meet her lover.

How Mary's heart throbbed with delight as she saw him coming towards them ! They all went through the flower-tent together, and admired its gay and varied produce. After having watched the sports for some time, Bob proposed to Mary to leave her companions and to walk with him to a wood on the opposite hill, where he told her they could rest and be alone and unobserved. Mary, wishing to be with her lover, gave a ready assent to his proposal, and, telling her fellow-servants that Bob would see her home, where she would return at the appointed time, left the field. It was a beautiful afternoon. The fine elm trees in the meadow through which they passed cast a long shadow across the path, and here and there a leaf fell to the ground, for the decay of autumn had begun.

Could the shadows and the fall of the leaf be an emblem of what was so soon to come to pass ? But Mary was so happy that *she* could not think of anything but her lover, who was by her side.



BOB MERTON AND MARY BEACH.

'She was fascinated by him.'—P. 113.

To face p. 113.

When Mary and her lover reached the wood, they stood for awhile and gazed on the beautiful scene around. Opposite to them was the steep hill of the Roman camp glowing in the warm light of the afternoon sun. Below them in the valley, standing amidst its fine elm-trees, they could see the grey-brown walls of Morley Court, and near to it the white tents of the flower-show, and they could hear the shouts of applause that greeted the winners in the sports. But the only voice that Mary cared to hear was that of her lover.

Bob Merton's words sounded pleasantly to Mary; for he spoke sweetly, indeed, with his lips, but in his heart meditated evil. Mary, who was innocent herself, never thought that her Bob would do her any wrong. She was fascinated by him, as the little bird is fascinated by the serpent bent upon its destruction. She, poor girl, believed all that Bob Merton said was the expression of his undying love. Her own young heart overflowed with love for him,

who was everything to her, for he had promised to make her his wife, and she did not think but that he would do as he had promised. She looked forward with joy to a bright future in a pretty cottage home with Bob Merton as her husband.

They found a pleasant resting-place in the wood, where they remained for some time talking over their plans for the future, and fixed a day for their wedding. Then the Tempter came, and Mary listened to his persuasive voice.

The sun was about to set, and it was time to return home; but they had lost their way, and it was with difficulty that they found the path that led across the fields to Morley Court.

Clouds had gathered in the western sky, and it was evident that a storm was approaching. Bob and Mary hurried on. The lightning flashed, and the thunder became louder and louder, till, in one terrific peal, it burst over their heads. They were almost blinded by the lightning,

which struck a fine elm close to the entrance gate, tearing off a huge limb, that fell across the road. A step more in advance and they would have been killed.

Mary, who had forgotten God, now realized His presence. 'The Lord had thundered from heaven, and the Highest gave His voice.'

She tore herself away from her lover and hurried on. The rain, which fell heavily, mingled with her tears. When she entered the house she found the servants were at supper, but feeling wretched, and being wet and tired, she would not join them. She went to her room and threw herself on her bed in an agony of remorse. The bitter recollection of all that had passed that afternoon came before her. What had she gained? Shame and sorrow. What had she lost? Innocence and happiness.

Wearied out, she sought rest; but her sleep was disturbed, and when she awoke the following morning her first thought

was of her sin. How bitter was the remembrance! She would have given worlds to have recalled the past, but it could not be. Her guilty secret lay gnawing at her conscience, and though she went about her work, and tried to appear as usual, she was not, she could not be happy. The brightness of her life was past.

But the Good Shepherd looked on her with eyes of love, and followed her. He would not forsake His sinful creature, though in her blindness she had forsaken Him. He called on her to return, and after many hard and painful struggles, grace conquered, and Mary listened to the loving voice, and called, though it was but feebly, for help to rise from the sad state into which she had fallen.

The Good Shepherd tenderly raised her up, and pressed her to His heart, burning with love. He bound up her wounds, and rejoicing that He had found His sheep that was lost, He gave her the kiss of peace and reconciliation. The blood from His

hands, wounded in search of her, fell upon her, and by that blood her sin was washed away.

Mary Beach was truly penitent for her fall, and if it had pleased God to spare her life, she would have done her best to atone for the past.

But illness came upon her; she was obliged to leave her situation and return to her home, bearing with her the burden of her sin and her shame, and conscious of the great trouble she was about to bring on those she loved.

‘Sin begetteth Death.’ God had sent her a temporal punishment in her illness, which increased and ended in death. Her sufferings were very great; she bore them all in union with those of her Saviour, Whom she had so deeply offended, and offered them as an atonement for her sin. She ‘was most patient and good, and quite resigned to the will of God,’ and even ‘expressed a great wish to die.’

Towards the end a dark cloud of uncon-

sciousness came over her, and she lay for five days in her death agony. God's priest on earth was unable to give her the last consolation of religion ; but may we not believe that ' a minister of the Church above, an invisible messenger of mercy, was near to help her soul to appear before the dread tribunal ' ? * And when for a few moments that dark cloud of unconsciousness was lifted, may we not hope that, as she gazed on the image of her crucified Lord, which all through her long agony she held in her hand, that she must have been helped by it to make acts of sincere sorrow and fervent love ?

In the darkness of night her soul was called before the Judgment Seat.

May she rest in peace, and may our prayers for her be speedily heard, that she may be ' brought out of the lake of misery, and from the mire of dregs.' May her feet be set upon a rock, and a new song put

* 'The Apostleship of Prayer,' page 291.

into her mouth, a song to her God (Ps. xxxix.).

Some days after the funeral Ellen Weston received a letter from Mary's mother, which announced her daughter's death, but gave no particulars. It was quite a shock to Ellen, as well as to Mrs. Norton, who, on her return home, after a few days' absence, learned from Ellen the sad news, 'Mary is dead.'

'Mary dead!' said Mrs. Norton, hardly able to realize it; and then, after a few moments' silence, she added: 'thank God, then, she is safe, for there are things that are worse than death.'

Mrs. Norton did not then know that the very fate she had always feared for Mary had become a reality. She had always felt anxiety lest Mary should allow herself to yield to temptation and so fall into sin; hence her constant solicitude for her, and hence the many efforts she made to help the poor girl.

Both Mrs. Norton and Ellen were very grieved when they learnt the sad cause of Mary's death.

'Poor Mary!' Ellen exclaimed, 'how terrible! I did not think that she would have done such a thing. If she had only listened to me, and not to that man, all would have been right. I told her that men were flatterers, and so often warned her to be careful, and to respect herself.'

